

What they failed to reckon was that you
were full of grace, a holy fool,
incapable of hating Turk or Jew,
too cool to care if people popped

an occasional contraceptive pill.
You loved the goddamned world, I think,
from proletariat to commissariate,
you let the sinners tap the spiritual till
(your sin was surely more than venial).

Pope John you poor old homely man
you were the best damn pope since Peter.
Perhaps we will fight fewer holy wars.
May peace be your eternal portion.

Peter

This much is clear: he was no coward.
Remember his spontaneous response
the first time that the fuzz laid hands
upon the man he loved. With one quick
thrust he zipped that fascist mother's ear off.
Later, however, at the station house
the infiltrators caught him off his guard.
He was hungover, hadn't slept, and knew
he couldn't get his boss a bondsman
if they busted his own ass.
(Let's forget that miserable fiction of
the crowing cock, a facile literary ornament
first introduced by frustrated hacks.)
And when the heat was really on
he still went all around the world
confessing for the man he had loved most of all.

Simon Peter was a big-balled man
who died with them dangling in his face.
Which is more, I think, than you or I
are apt to ask for.

#29

the casanova of dohenny's bar in seal beach
california is a cat of forty years or so
who loses once in a while at pool but not
often. when he does it is quietly and with

grace. he is as good-natured as his
generation at their best, those who came
back from the war in europe and could
have been discouraged but went out instead